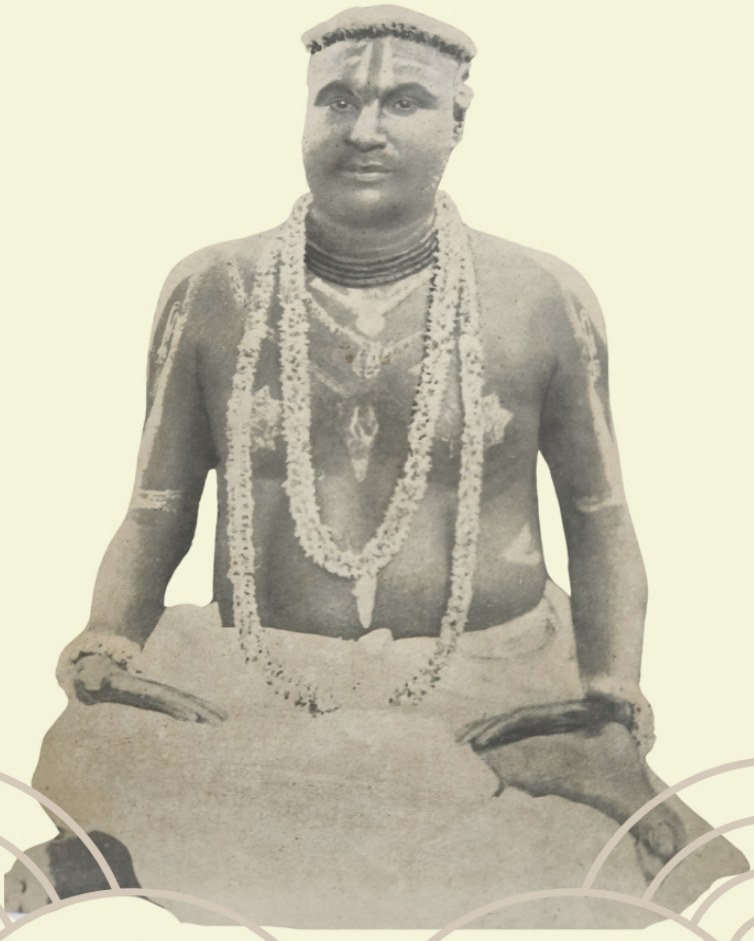
Paramananda Dasanudas

What is it?

BHAJ NITAI GOUR RADHESHYAM JAPA HARE KRISHNA HARE RAM

and how it can trully enhance your spiritual growth



MAṄGALĀCARAṆAM

om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
chakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ

I bow down to the Guru, who opens the eyes of the blind
with the salve of knowledge

nityānandam ahaṁ vande, karṇe lambita-mauktikam
caitanyāgraja-rūpeṇa, pavitrī-kṛta-bhūtalam

I humbly bow down to and glorify Lord Sri Nityananda Prabhu, on whose beautiful left lotus ear one elegant pearl ornament is swinging. Accepting the role as the elder brother of the Supreme Lord Gauranga Mahaprabhu, Lord Nityananda Prabhu sanctified the whole world and purified all the living entities.

ānanda-līlā-maya-vigrahāya hemābha-divyac-chavi-sundarāya tasmai mahā-prema-rasa-pradāya caitanya-candrāya namo namaste

O Śrī Caitanya-candra, I offer You my repeated obeisances. You are the personification of Kṛṣṇa's blissful pastimes, and You are extraordinarily beautiful, having a dazzling golden luster. You have awarded to the people of the world the topmost mellows of ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa.

jay sri-rupa sanatana bhatta-raghunath sri-jiva gopala-bhatta dasa-raghunathkṛṣṇa
ei chay gosai kori carana vandan jaha hoite bighna-nas abhista-puran

All glories to Sri Rupa Gosvāmī, Sanatana Gosvāmī, Raghunath Bhatta Gosvāmī, Sri Jiva Gosvāmī, Gopala Bhatta Gosvāmī, and Raghunatha dasa Gosvāmī. I offer my obeisances to the feet of these six Gosvāmīs. By offering them obeisances all obstacles to devotion are destroyed and spiritual desires are fulfilled.

jaya jaya śrī-gouranga jaya nityānanda
jaya advaita-candra jaya gadadhara jaya gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

All glories to Lord Śrī Gouranga Mahāprabhu and Lord Śrī Nityānanda! All glories to Advaitacandra, and all glories to the devotees of Lord Gaurāṅga!

हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे |
हरे राम हरे राम राम राम हरे हरे ||

hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare

Bhaj Nitai Gour Radhe Shyam Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram

Is this a Mantra or a Harinaam?
If this Mantra is employed
does it signify that we are chanting a form of namabhas?
A shadow of the holy name?
Is it appropriate to refer to Nitai Gour and Radhe Shyam together?
Are They on the same platform?

I will address these questions in this text to illuminate and enhance understanding.

tṛṇād api su-nīcena

First, we recount the famous lila in which Raghunāth dās Gosvāmī sought the blessings of Sri Gouranga Mahaprabhu in his youth but was initially turned away. Upon inquiry, Gouranga revealed that he must first approach Nitai. When the Gosvāmī met Nityananda Ram, he was told that he was attempting to claim something that belonged to Nityananda, and thus he must be punished. Nityananda instructed him to prepare a feast with flat rice and yogurt for all the sadhus and Vaishnavas. This story reveals that direct access to Gouranga Mahaprabhu is not possible; He embodies both Radha and Krishna. Therefore, to reach Gouranga, one must first attain the oceanic mercy (kripa) of Nityananda Ram. Once that mercy is achieved, the gates to the heart of Sri Gouranga Mahaprabhu will swing open. For an accurate understanding of the pastimes of Raghunāth dās Gosvāmī with Nityananda and Gouranga Mahaprabhu, please read Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā, chapter 6.

Bhaj Nitai Goura

The word Bhaj or Bhaja (Sanskrit: भज्) means to revere, admire, worship, venerate, esteem, honor, and respect. It is correct to say Nitai first and then Gour. Importantly, Nitai is Bhagavan just as Gaura is Bhagavan; Nityananda Ram represents Balaram, Sankarshan, and Baladev, and in the lila, He manifests extraordinary mercy towards us. As Nitya Baddhas, we find Nityananda Ram to be the most powerful and accessible. Thus, we should earnestly worship Nitai, asking for His shelter: “Nitai, please shelter this fallen soul.” From personal experience, once you align yourself with Nityananda's love, He will introduce you to Gouranga. He will acknowledge you as part of His army of love, affirming your acceptance. Gouranga Mahaprabhu himself directed Nityananda to reach every nook and cranny of the world, particularly outside of Nabadwip, ensuring that if you belong to Nityananda's fold, you will certainly receive Gouranga's acceptance and grace. Ultimately, serve the lotus feet of Nitai, for through this devotion, you will also serve the lotus feet of Gouranga Mahaprabhu. Does this

understanding resonate? Yes. Is it supported by scripture? Absolutely. First, we honor the Jagad Guru Nitai, the eternal guru, and the very essence of the ultimate reality. Nitai and Goura are names of Hari, and Bhaj Nitai Goura represents Harinaamm, the names of God; thus, Bhaj Nitai Goura is indeed correct.

Radhe Shyam

Attaining the mercy of Nitai and Gouranga opens the doors to the Nitya Lila Vrindavan, where one can connect with Radhe Shyam, for Radharani refers to Krishna as "Shyam," the sweetest name in her heart. In the Nitya Lila of Vrindavan, the name Shyam is cherished, as Krishna is often addressed by friends or “other people," while Radhika's love for the Naam "Shyam" underscores the significance of Radhe Shyam. Thus, we worship, meditate, and immerse ourselves in the names and qualities of Nitai and Gouranga, who are none other than Balaram and Krishna, with Goura being synonymous with Radhe Shyam. According to shastras, all devotion directed towards Krishna flows through Radharani. We cannot directly approach Radharani due to our Nitya Baddha condition by simply saying, “Radhe Radhe Radhe,” or “Krishna Krishna Krishna,” without invoking “Nitai,” “Gour,” Radhe.” To claim such a thing is a foolish idea that lacks authenticity and is not found in Shastras; our previous Acharyas have never taught that without humility and a pure heart, we can serve Radhe Shyam in Vraj Lila, as it is through her that Krishna becomes pleased with our service. Indeed, Radharani serves as the spiritual filter, and the simple line “Bhaj Nitai Gour Radhe Shyam” encapsulates the perfect Gaudiya Vaishnav process for approaching the lotus feet of Radhe Shyam. Worshipping Nitai and Goura will lead you to Radhe Shyam in Vraj, not in Dwarka or Vaikuntha but in Vraj; it is essential to immerse your heart in the service of Nitai, Gouranga, and Radhe Shyam.

Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram

However, one must know the process to achieve this goal, for without guidance, one could imagine any arbitrary practice. The clear process for attaining perfection in spiritual life has been laid out by the Shad Goswamis (Rupa Goswami, Sanatana Goswami, Jiva Goswami, Gopala Bhatta Goswami, Raghunatha Dasa Goswami, Raghunatha Bhatta Goswami) and illustrated by the intimate associates of Sri Gouranga Mahaprabhu. This process involves Japa —specifically, chanting “Hare Krishna Hare Ram - Maha Mantra” while **counting** on your Mala, as this mantra is the central instruction in Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Therefore, the ultimate spiritual practice, or daily Sadhana, is to engage in Japa of “Hare Krishna Hare Ram.” This is the core and most important aspect. Even in the times of Purashcharana, you may have many prescriptions and tasks to perform, but the one that must remain, above all, is the Japa of your Mantra. Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram is the essence of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Therefore, saying “Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram” is correct. Any intelligent person can understand what I

am saying and would agree that Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram is the core process of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. If it isn't this, then what is the primary process? There is none more significant than Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram; everything else—such as Kīrtana, Seva (service), meditation, Smaranam, and studies—follows. Thus, the most crucial aspect of your sadhana for real progress must be Japa Hare Krishna, Hare Ram. Consequently, saying "Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram" is indeed correct. Furthermore, the supreme instruction for achieving perfection for Gaudiyas is "Bhaj Nitai Goura Radhe Shyam." How do we achieve Nitai, Goura, Radhe and Shyam? Through Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram.

Bhaj Nitai Goura Radhe Shyam Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram

Is not a mantra at all, it is a Harinaam song, a Kīrtana line designed to remind you (us) of the Sādhanā (process) and the Sādhya (goal.) My Sādhya is "Bhaj Nitai Gour Radhe Shyam," and the Sādhanā is "Japa Hare Krishna, Hare Ram." There can be nothing non-bonafide in this Upadesh Kīrtana, the supreme instruction.

Is this an alternative to the Maha Mantra?

Impossible! Our Japa, as Radharaman Gan (followers), Radharaman Parivar (family), is exclusively "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare." In fact, our understanding and respect for the Maha Mantra are so profound that we refrain from chanting it aloud, as third parties could commit offenses to this holy and supreme Mantra, the Maha Mantra. In connection with this, I found an enlightening lecture by a renowned Bengali Gaudiya Vaishnava from Sri Gadadhar Parivar, who passed away years ago and conducted his Sadhana in Vrindavan, where he wrote and delivered numerous lectures. This lecture was sent to me by one of his direct disciples, since I was unable to find the date and place of this lecture, I will refrain from giving his name. However, I quote his enlightening words here, which explain the nature of our mind in relation to the Mahamantra in Kīrtana.

"The name Maha Mantra is not different from Bhagawan. If one commits an offense against it, he will fall down, because the name is his best friend. **One of the (10) offenses** is to make a faithless or disinterested person hear the holy name, which is not pleasing to Bhagawan and is disrespectful. One should not misuse the name in this way. For instance, when people broadcast Kīrtana everywhere with loudspeakers for others to hear, there may be individuals who do not appreciate the Kīrtana, thus committing an offense on the part of those spreading it. Furthermore, how many people who have heard Naam Kīrtana have really changed? So much Kīrtana occurs, but how many have transformed?

Question: Should one be more concerned about chanting offensively?

Answer: Yes, one should chant for one's own sake.

Question: Are the trees benefiting from one's chanting?

Answer: That is not your concern; think about your own benefit and don't worry about the trees. Mahaprabhu chanting with animals illustrates the power of the holy name, which should not be imitated, especially by those who can hardly chant with attention and lack attachment to the holy name. How can you benefit others when you have not realized it yourself?"

To preach the glories of the holy name to a faithless person

Aparādha, number 9

Yes, offenses to the Holy Names can drive one to madness, which is the first stage before hellish destinations, according to the explanation of Srila Jiva Goswami. Therefore, we don't chant loudly. In the ten offenses to the Names, it clearly states that **we should not preach the glories of the Name to non-believers**. I have witnessed in Europe, North and South America how people laugh at and mock devotees chanting Hare Krishna, saying things like "Merry Krishmas" or other remarks that make fun of the Maha Mantra. This offense is not only directed at the ignorant but also at those who create such offenses (by giving milk to the snake). If I am giving this Mantra to everyone in the street to say, I am surely committing offenses. Read the ten offenses to the Name properly, and you will realize that we must be very careful about with whom we chant, who is chanting, and their state of mind, etc. Those offenses will start to create five different spiritual deviations that result in monstrous behaviors.

Results of Naam Aparādha - The Five Spiritual Disasters

In Bhakti-sandarbha, Sri Jiva Goswami describes five significant effects of offensive chanting of the transcendental names of Sri Krishna.

The five effects are as follows: trickery, infidelity, absorption in mundane objects that erode faith, laxity in devotional service, and pride. If a sadhaka is experiencing any of the following effects, it means they are committing offenses to Sri Krishna Naam:

1) Twisted Mind and Heart
Offenders of Naam become twisted in their dealings with others, disrespectful to Sri Hari, Sri Guru, and other devotees, and begin to act in various deceptive ways. In Skanda Purana, Muni Parasara states: "Twisted and deceptive people **cannot obtain Govinda Bhakti** or chant and remember Bhagavan."

2) Infidelity
Those who offend the Naam gradually **become unfaithful**, lose their conviction regarding the glories of Krishna Bhakti, and start harboring non-devotional and contradictory ideas.
3) Distraction
Naam Aparādhis become **absorbed in material objects** and activities, such as earning money and obtaining titles, which erodes their faith in Krishna and Krishna Bhakti.

4) Weakened Devotion
As a result of Naam Aparādha, the **Bhakti Bhajan of the Aparādhi fades**, and they become absorbed once again in sensory gratification.

5) Pride
When Sri Naam Prabhu is offended, one starts to **feel proud of their service** and devotional activities. This, in turn, generates further offenses, such as disrespecting the Vaishnavas. As they say, "pride precedes a fall."

- Sri Jiva Goswami, Bhakti-Sandarbha (anu. 154-159)

To avoid all kinds of offenses while continuing to share the names of Hari, we can engage in Harinaam Kīrtanas (not Mantras), as there are countless Kīrtanas available. There isn't just one Kīrtana; there are millions and infinite Kīrtanas we can use because the Names of Hari are infinite.

By also saying “Nitai Goura,” we are asking for forgiveness for any offense we may commit, whether conscious or unconscious. When you chant the Maha Mantra, during your Japa, do you not begin with “Jaya Sri Gouranga Nityananda Sri Advaita Chandra, Gadadhara Srivas adi Goura Bhakta Vrinda” to ask for permission and forgiveness for any offenses during your Japa? Yes? And then you chant your Hare Krishna Maha Mantra, right? Yes. This is the same with the Name of Radhe Shyam.

The loud chanting

Just as we do not chant the Gayatris aloud because they are Mantras, we should also refrain from chanting the Maha Mantra aloud, as it too is a Mantra and has specific regulations. We can use the holy name as songs for Kīrtana, similar to those composed by Narottam Das Thakur, but not the Mantras, specifically not the Maha Mantra. This is exemplified by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who never chanted the Kīrtana of the Maha Mantra. All his Kīrtanas are recorded in his biographies, and none contain the Maha Mantra.

Nitai Gaura's spiritual protection

Recite “Nitai Goura please protect us.” Please safeguard everyone who hears this Kīrtana, and let any offenses not count against me or anyone else. Please, Nitai Goura, grant us Radhe Shyam. Cleanse us of our offenses and accept our service.

Who created Bhaj Nitai Gour Radhe Shyam Kīrtana?

Many might think that Mahapurush Sri Radharaman Charan Das Dev sat down and said, “Okay, let me create a song for my followers, something musical and rhythmic.” However, the true story is that he was in deep Samadhi while the devotees were performing Hari Kīrtana. In that trance, after a long time immersed in divine bliss, he returned to external consciousness, with everyone around him caring for him since he was far removed from material reality. Before opening his eyes, Sri Radharaman Charan Das Dev, Bade Baba, murmured constantly, “Bhaj Nitai Gour Radhe Shyam Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram.” All his intimate associates heard this, but it was not Sri Radharaman Charan Das Dev who said, “Okay, now we chant Bhaj Nitai Gour Radhe Shyam Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram.” It was his beloved and powerful disciple, Namacharya Siddha Sri Ram Das Babaji Maharaj, who initiated the Kīrtana of this divine song of Harinaam that Sri Radharaman Charan Das Dev brought from the Nitya Lila during his deep Samadhi and gifted to us. It was Namacharya Siddha Sri Ram Das Babaji Maharaj who properly initiated the Kīrtana and propagated this song everywhere. Sri Radharaman Charan Das Dev had no ego or selfishness, being a Nitya Siddha from the beginning.

Embrace your spiritual growth by letting go of limiting thoughts

I know that this is difficult to understand, but it requires study. I came from a completely different Nityananda Parivar line, but my studies led me to understand who Sri Radharaman Charan Das Dev truly is. Now that you have knowledge of this song, “Bhaj Nitai Gour Radhe Shyam Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram,” you can use it as well. It's good to question anything that is outside our scope in order to learn, but once you have learned and gained knowledge of what it is, you can delve deeper into the Shastras and realize that everything in this Naam song is bona fide. However, with great power comes great responsibility. No one should commit offenses against “Bhaj Nitai Gour Radhe Shyam Japa Hare Krishna Hare Ram,” claiming it to be namabhasa, or anything else. Such statements are offenses to the Nam, because Nitai, Gour, Radhe, Hare, Krishna, Ram are Harinaam.

Worship Nitai to attain Sri Gouranga and you will receive Radha Krishna in Vraj. Perform your japa—Hare Krishna Hare Ram—as this is the process to perfection.

Jay Mahavira Radharaman
Jay Nitai
Jay Gour
Jay Jay Sri Radhe Shyam

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gourasangha.org – mahamantra.info